



Men's Health Articles

1. Men Get Depressed Too! What You Can Do About It

Depression is a very serious but treatable condition that affects adults and children regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Learn more about depression and how to get help.

2. Ways to Reduce Stress

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, but too much stress can lead to health problems, such as heart disease, obesity, and a weakened immune system. While there is no way to eliminate stress, there are ways to reduce it.

3. Slowing the Aging Process

On late night television you see the promises from infomercials — a cream that “wipes off the years,” a lotion that grows hair, a solution that makes varicose veins disappear. Slowing the effects of aging has been a goal for many people, but what's the secret?

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People with chronic physical illness are at a higher risk than the general population for developing depression. Also, depression can lead to heart disease.

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Improving your everyday communication skills can strengthen your relationships and help you get what you want. Learn ways to improve your everyday communication skills, as well as tips to follow when conflict erupts.

Men Get Depressed Too! What You Can Do About It

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Bill had been feeling “out of sorts” over the past few weeks. In addition, he'd also been experiencing stomachaches and back pain regularly. His wife Wendy had noticed that he had become more withdrawn too – he spent longer hours at work and had difficulty interacting with their six-year-old son. In a conversation with his brother-in-law John, Bill admitted that he just didn't feel like himself, and though he tried, he couldn't stop feeling “down.”

After talking to John, Bill realized that he might be suffering from depression and decided to get help. Depression is a very serious but treatable condition that affects adults and children regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Approximately 5% of the American adult population deal with depression (<http://www.nami.com>).

What Is Depression?

Depression is an illness that affects the whole body and includes both physical and emotional symptoms. According to the National Institutes of Health, depression interferes with the ability to work, study, sleep, eat, and enjoy activities that were once pleasurable. Not everyone experiences the same symptoms or experiences them at the same severity.

You may have depression if you have experienced any of the following symptoms:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism

- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Trouble sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain, which do not respond to routine treatment

Sometimes depression occurs simultaneously with substance abuse. When this happens, the alcohol or substance is abused to mask the symptoms of depression. If you have or had a substance abuse problem and think you may also have symptoms of depression, discuss your concerns with your treatment team.

Visit <http://menanddepression.nimh.nih.gov> or <http://www.liveandworkwell.com/prevention> for more information.

Getting Help

"Not even four Super Bowl wins can compare to the sense of accomplishment I feel for overcoming my life-long struggle with depression. It's nice to finally know that it wasn't just me, depression was something beyond my control."

- Terry Bradshaw, former NFL quarterback for Pittsburgh Steelers

Terry Bradshaw is just one of the many celebrities breaking the silence about depression. Though he suffered from depression, unknowingly for years, it was only after acknowledging his condition and seeking help that he healed and learned how to manage his condition.

Bill, who shared his story previously, also struggled with seeking help. "I was afraid of what people might think or say about me, but then I realized that anything was better than how I was feeling."

Recognizing that you have depression and deciding to do something about it is often the hardest part of the condition. It helps to remember that DOING something about how you are feeling is the best way to help you feel better.

The first step is to talk to someone about it. There are many people trained and qualified to help with this disease. Any of the following professionals can help you treat depression:

- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Mental Health Counselor
- Family Therapist
- Pastoral Counselor
- EAP Professional
- Primary Care Provider

Services provided by these individuals are completely confidential. Some individuals prefer to talk to a spouse, partner or friend first for some initial support before talking with a therapist or doctor.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, death, or self-harm seek help immediately:

- Call 911
- Call the national suicide hotline 1-800-SUICIDE

- Contact a close friend, physician, or clergy person
- Go the emergency room

Talking About It

If you are anxious talking about your symptoms or beginning a session in therapy or counseling, here are a few simple ways to get the conversation started:

- I just don't feel like myself.
- My spouse/friend/partner thinks I might be depressed.
- I am having trouble controlling my diabetes/hypertension/chronic illness.
- I haven't been sleeping well lately.
- I've noticed that I feel (name symptoms you've experienced).
- I think I might have depression.

Treatment Options

If you have been feeling any of the symptoms mentioned above, a mental health professional can work with you to outline strategies to help you overcome it. There are two primary types of treatment for depression – medication and psychotherapy. In many cases, a combination of these two treatments is used.

Depression may be caused by a chemical imbalance in your brain. When this happens the neural circuits that regulate moods, thinking, sleep, appetite, and behavior do not function properly. To help regulate the chemicals, medication is often prescribed, and in some cases is followed by psychotherapy.

A situational change or transition may also cause depression. Trauma, loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship, change at work, financial problems, or any stressful change in life patterns may cause or contribute to a person's depression. Treatment in this case is commonly psychotherapy to teach the individual how to handle stress, change, and their feelings. Medication may also be prescribed to help the person through a particularly difficult time.

To learn more about depression and treatment options, here a few questions you might want to ask your therapist or doctor:

- Can you explain how this condition affects my body? Both emotionally and physically?
- What types of treatment are recommended for depression?
- What are the benefits of each?
- How long does the treatment last?
- How long do I have to wait to see results?

Conclusion

"It's tough talking about it at first," Bill told John later that year, "but I'm glad I did it. I'm a much better person for it." Bill learned how to manage his depression by talking to a therapist. His stomachaches had lessened, and he had more energy to play with his son.

Depression is a serious disease, and though it is becoming more and more recognized many people ignore their symptoms and fail to seek treatment. If you have questions about depression or feel that you have any of the physical or emotional symptoms listed above, contact a mental health professional immediately.

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Ways to Reduce Stress

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Stress is a part of life that cannot be avoided, but too much stress can lead to major health problems, such as heart disease and obesity, and weakens your immune system. While there is no way to make life "stress free," there are many ways to reduce stress.

The following is a list of simple stress reducers from individuals and counselors who have successfully learned how to handle and manage their stress.

Practice Good Time Management

A lot of stress is added to our day when we work under tight deadlines or have limited time to complete projects or tasks. Here are some basic suggestions for gaining more control of your time.

- Get up 15 minutes earlier or at least on time. You'll start the day with enough time and won't feel that you have to "catch-up."
- Focus only on the present day. Don't worry about what has already happened or worry in advance about future challenges.
- Allow extra time for everything. By planning a tightly packed schedule, you can't be flexible when things are out of your control.
- Write down everything. If you want to remember it, put it in writing. There are many tools to help with this, from electronic calendars to the standard notebook.
- Plan ahead. Have a timeline for all projects with ample cushion in case things don't go as planned. Be prepared for the unexpected. This also includes stocking supplies and cupboards so that you don't run out of necessities when you need them most.
- Break projects into small pieces. Give yourself rewards every time you reach a mini-goal.
- Do the most unpleasant task first. Once this is done, you can relax for the rest of the day.
- Schedule breaks and take them. These breaks can be incentives throughout the day and give you a needed rest from the task at hand.
- Delegate tasks. Remember, you aren't responsible for everything.
- Work with contingency plans. Be prepared in case plans fall through. For example, when planning a night out, have three restaurants in mind and three activity options instead of just one.
- Visualize success for stressful events and activities. This helps you mentally prepare for the event, and it is positive, effective self-talk. For example, athletes visualize every step of a race, from waking in the morning, to dressing, to the race itself.
- Plan for the next day the night before. Pack your lunch and lay out your clothes. You'll save time in the morning, and are less likely to forget the important details.
- Go to bed on time. Your stress level goes up when you aren't well rested.

Change Your Attitude

You can reduce stress simply by adopting a new attitude, even if you change nothing else in your life. Work to change your perspective:

- Challenge yourself to see the positive. View crises or problems as opportunities or learning experiences.
- Eliminate negative self-talk. Stop saying "I can't" or other similar phrases.
- Learn to be flexible. Anticipate that things won't go as planned all the time and accept that there are other equally acceptable ways to do things.
- Spend time with positive people. Surround yourself with supportive friends who encourage a positive attitude.
- Differentiate what you need and what you want. Attend to your needs first and then, as time or money allows, attend to your wants. Recognizing that some things aren't absolutely necessary reduces anxiety about that which you don't have.
- Stop making judgments about people or ideas. Many times judgments are negative and carry over into other areas of life. They may also create unrealistic and unfair expectations.
- Talk less and listen more. Miscommunication can quickly lead to problems, which then lead to stress. Be more conscious of what another person is saying rather than what you are saying to them.
- Do something nice for someone else. In doing a random act of kindness, you can separate yourself from your own worries. It is also very rewarding and fulfilling to make someone else happy.
- Talk out your problems or discuss your bad days with a friend. Sharing your pent-up emotions and feelings allows you to release them before they become internalized and more stressful.

- **Improve Your Health.** An unhealthy lifestyle may make you more vulnerable to stress. Being in good health makes you better equipped with energy to tackle challenges successfully, thereby avoiding stress.
- **Eat a balanced, nutritious diet,** rich in fruits and vegetables. A healthy diet gives your body the proper vitamins and minerals it needs to perform.
- **Get at least seven to eight hours of sleep every night.** Being well rested, you can face problems easier and they may not be as stressful.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol,** and if you smoke, quit. It takes extra energy to process the chemicals in these substances.
- **Monitor your breathing.** Take deep slow breaths to increase oxygen supply throughout your body when you feel stressed or anxious.
- **Exercise.** Not only does exercise improve your cardiovascular health, but it provides a good outlet for stress and anxiety.
- **Focus on your needs.** Taking a little time for yourself to rest and relax is not selfish--it is necessary to recharge your energy. By taking care of yourself, you have the energy to take care of others.
- **Allow yourself to say "no."** Know your limits. If you will not enjoy or appreciate the task or activity, it wastes time that could be spent elsewhere.
- **Find humor in work.** Laughter naturally releases stress and loosens the body.
- **Learn relaxation techniques** to do at work and home. Consider taking a yoga class or practice meditation.
- **Remember that it's okay to make mistakes.** Don't hold yourself and others to unfair expectations of perfection.
- **Nurture your child side.** Many adults remember childhood as carefree and fun, so relive it! Read a children's book, swing at the park, or draw a picture.
- **Do something fun and enjoyable for yourself everyday.** You may be working hard to please others, your manager, your family, and many more, but don't forget about yourself. Dedicate some time to do something that you value.
- **Accept that there are some things you cannot change.** You could spend hours thinking about things that you cannot change and you would only be worse for it, losing energy and time and increasing stress. Recognize that you are not happy with something, accept it, and move on.
- **Separate worries from concerns.** Worries waste your time because there is nothing that you can do about them except think about them. With concerns, identify what you can change and let it be.
- **Stop worrying about past decisions.** Eliminate the phrase, "I should have" from your vocabulary. It's not helpful and only reduces your self-esteem. You learn from the decision and move on.
- **Balance your workweek with your weekends.** For example, if you spend your weekdays at the computer, plan some energetic activities for the weekend.

Conclusion

Everyone experiences stress, but there are ways to control it. To improve your overall well-being, take proactive steps to manage stress by learning coping skills and strategies.

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Slowing the Aging Process

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On late night television the promises from infomercials flow freely – a cream that “wipes off the years,” a lotion that grows hair, a solution that makes varicose veins disappear. Slowing the effects of aging has been a goal for many people throughout the centuries. So what is the secret?

This article will discuss the process of aging and give you some tips for slowing the aging process – no matter how old you are.

Why Do We Age?

Aging affects all of the body's organs, tissues and cells. There are two main theories about why we age. One theory is that we all have some internal clock, which slowly makes our bodies self-destruct. The other theory is our bodies contain genetic mistakes, or flaws, and combined with the wear and tear of life – our bodies become damaged beyond repair.

Scientists and researchers don't have hard data explaining why we age. All they have are theories and hypotheses. While scientists keep poking and prodding to find the cause, there are some things that are known about aging.

As the body ages many changes occur. From a slower metabolism to hearing loss to stiff joints, eyesight deterioration and bones, which are more brittle – it seems every component of the body feels the effects of growing older. There are some things you can do to slow this process.

Tips for Turning Back the Clock -

The following tips won't make you feel like you are 25 again, but they will help you have more energy and address some of your body's needs.

Exercise -

Working out can make you feel younger. Researchers at Bloomburg University in Pennsylvania reported to the Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness that 80 percent of the people who exercised at least 30 minutes three times a week had a slower decline of their cardiovascular system. The heart's ability to use oxygen declines at a rate of about 1 percent a year and exercise impedes that decline. Their research also found that benefits of exercise can be achieved in four months.

Fruits and vegetables -

Eating fruits and vegetables containing anti-oxidants can help you reduce the levels of toxins you have in your body, according to research. Anti-oxidants can help you live a longer, healthier life. Most yellow-orange, dark-green leafy vegetables and fruits such as kale, romaine lettuce, beet greens, cassava, broccoli, carrots, mushrooms, pumpkins, spinach, yams, tomatoes, apricots, papaya, peaches, cantaloupe, coriander, basil and parsley have anti-oxidants. As we age we need to have more vitamins and minerals, so eating the recommended daily allowance of six fruits and vegetables per day really improves your health.

Limit sugar -

As the body ages so does its ability to handle sweets. The risk of diabetes increases with age. According to the American Diabetes Association, about half of all cases of diabetes occur in people 55 or older. It is difficult to give up sugar altogether, so instead, choose a favorite dessert and enjoy it occasionally. Another way to cut back is to opt for smaller portions of your favorite concoctions.

Weighty issue -

Men and women in their 50s are more likely to be obese than at any other time of their lives. With every 10 percent increase over normal weight, men and women have about a 20 percent better risk for heart disease. Thirty percent of the average American's diet consists of junk food. Eat a diet high in grains and cut back on fat, fried foods and red meat. Avoid fad diets.

Supplemental information -

In the fight against aging, anti-oxidants equate to a longer, healthier life. Vitamin E, C and A are three of the vitamins that can help you rid your body of toxins, or free radicals. Although studies have shown that most Americans don't get enough essential vitamins, make sure you talk with your doctor before taking supplemental vitamins.

Don't smoke -

The number one leading cause of preventable premature death in America is smoking. If you smoke and want a longer life, stop now. Smoking is considered a major coronary risk factor. Smokers are two-times more likely to have osteoporosis than non-smokers and it is a proven fact smoking causes lung cancer.

Stress -

Recent research suggests that prolonged exposure to the stress hormone can increase brain aging in later life, according to scientists at the University of Kentucky. Long-term stress can potentially cause hypertension and can affect the

immune system, cholesterol level, cardiovascular system and digestive system. The unhealthy effects of stress do not occur so much from the stress itself but rather from how we perceive and deal with the stress. Relieving stress in your life leads to a longer healthier life.

Stay social -

Being alone for long periods of time during middle age and beyond can be a health risk, according to Vitality Magazine. To expand your social circle, revive old friendships, volunteer, write letters and email, make phone calls or get involved in your community or church. Staying social will keep your mind working and your emotions in check.

Conclusion -

While researchers have their suspicions about the affects of aging and how they can manipulate human genetics to slow it, there are some things people can do now to slow the effects of aging. So don't wait for the latest miracle cure to pop up on your television screen, use the tried and true method of fighting off age with a healthy lifestyle.

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Depression and Heart Disease

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Depressive illness is a common condition and affects one in five individuals at some time in their lives. It is characterized by feelings of sadness, lack of pleasure or loss of interest in daily life. A depressed mood can be temporary with relatively mild symptoms, and may improve without treatment. In its more serious form, major depression is a severe mood disorder that doesn't change or improve unless treated, affects a person's memory and concentration, causes sleep and appetite changes, and can lead to suicide.

What are the Symptoms of Major Depression?

- Persistent sad or 'empty' mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being 'slowed down'
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia, early-morning waking or oversleeping)
- Eating disturbances (loss of appetite and weight, or weight gain)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- Irritability
- Excessive crying
- Chronic aches and pains that don't respond to treatment

A person who has five or more of these symptoms for more than two weeks should bring these symptoms to the attention of his or her doctor.

How is Depression Treated?

Once depression has been identified, there is help available. The two most effective kinds of treatment for major depression are antidepressant medication and psychological counseling. Best results occur with a combination of both treatments.

How is This Related to Heart Disease? Patients with chronic physical illness are at even higher risk than the general population with respect to developing depressive disorders. It is often a common but treatable complication of chronic conditions.

- The prevalence of depressive disorders in patients who have a history of heart attacks is estimated to be from 40-65%.

- 18-20% of coronary heart patients without history of heart attack may experience depression.

It has been well documented by several groups, that patients with coronary heart disease who are depressed are at higher risk for cardiac events (heart attacks) than are patients with comparable heart disease who are not depressed. Medical science is currently looking for the causes of this increased risk. One study, for instance, found there is a high prevalence of smoking among depressed patients with heart disease. Depression can also cause chemical changes in the body.

- Depression can increase symptoms related to medical illness, such as pain, fatigue, and sleep difficulty.
- People who survive heart attacks but suffer from major depression have a 3-4 times greater risk of dying within six months than those who don't suffer from depression.

What to Do if You or a Loved One is Depressed Due to Chronic Coronary Problems

- See your doctor for an evaluation.
- Get a referral for counseling, if indicated.
- Seek a support group in the community.

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Feed Your Head - the importance of good nutrition for good mental health

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You know that good nutrition helps you feel your physical best. But did you know that healthy eating is also crucial to your mental health? Feeding your brain with the right foods can help you think more clearly, stay alert and improve your concentration and attention span. Alternately, eating the wrong foods can slow down your reactions and decision-making capabilities.

Your brain and nervous system rely on food to build new proteins, cells and tissues to function properly. A combination of carbohydrates, protein, minerals and micronutrients — vitamins and minerals from fruits and vegetables — work together to fuel your mind.

Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, which your brain needs for energy. Equally important is protein, which helps stabilize your blood sugar to make you less drowsy and supplies your body with amino acids that help you think and react more quickly. Fatty acids are also crucial for the proper function of your brain and nervous system. Nutritionists recommend that your meals and snacks include a variety of foods to provide the many nutrients that improve mental function.

Food For Thought

Important nutrients and where to find them:

- Carbohydrates provide energy for your mind. Avoid simple carbohydrates found in sugar and candy. Stick to complex carbohydrates found in whole grains, breads, pasta, fruit and starchy vegetables.
- Protein stimulates your brain. Found in eggs, meats, nuts, dairy and soy products.
- Fatty Acids are essential for a healthy brain and nervous system. Best found in unsaturated fats, such as those in fish, corn oil and walnuts.

- Iron is necessary for normal activity levels and attention. Found in meat, kidney beans, whole wheat bread, spinach, egg yolk, carrots and raisins.
- Calcium has been shown to benefit mood. Found in dairy products, broccoli and cauliflower.
- Vitamin C helps preserve memory. Found in fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Zinc improves memory, reasoning and motor skills, according to recent studies. Found in fish, beef and soybeans.
- Magnesium helps alleviate confusion and improves concentration. Found in nuts, leafy vegetables, meat and fish.

What To Avoid:

Foods high in saturated fat, like potato chips and whole milk, affect your ability to concentrate (but remember, moderate amounts of unsaturated fats are essential to proper brain function). Sugar-filled snacks, like candy and soft drinks, create ups and downs, rather than stable energy levels.

Going to bed hungry can lead to restless sleep and insomnia. But eat only small snacks before bedtime. A large one will boost your metabolism and body temperature, making it hard to snooze.

Tips for Healthy Eating:

- Throw a piece of fruit in your purse or briefcase every morning. You'll have a healthy snack handy when you need a boost.
- Keep a box of cereal or instant oatmeal at work so you can always squeeze in a healthy breakfast.
- Snacks are important. They help you refuel to make it through the day. Just be sure to choose healthy foods and nibble carefully to avoid overeating.
- Think about where you eat. It's easy to overeat if you snack while absorbed in a good book or grab a bite while standing in front of the refrigerator. Find a place to sit and enjoy meals and snacks. It will help you keep track of what and how much you're eating.
- While you're at the grocery store, read and compare food labels to avoid foods high in saturated fat or empty calories.
- Plan your meals in advance to avoid last minute fast food trips.

Getting all the vitamins, minerals and micronutrients your brain needs can be easy. Just eat a wide variety of foods each week. Healthy eating is a safe, natural and fun way to stimulate your mind. Your emotional and mental well-being relies on it.

Get Off to a Good Start

Did you eat breakfast this morning? If you did, chances are you're thinking more clearly, having more ideas and making fewer mistakes than the person next to you. Or did you skip breakfast in order to make it to work on time? Bad idea. You may wind up cranky, forgetful and less productive.

Squeezing breakfast into your morning routine can be easy. Many breakfast foods can be stored at work or prepared the night before.

What to eat in the morning:

The most effective breakfast combines carbohydrates to provide fuel for the brain, and protein to keep you full and energized. A perfect breakfast could be scrambled eggs with toast and orange juice. Or, if you don't want to cook in the morning, top yogurt with low-fat granola or have a glass of milk with toast. Pair it with fruit or juice and you've got a healthy breakfast in less than five minutes. You'll make up those few minutes several times over with your increased productivity and energy throughout the day.

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Managing Communication and Conflict

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When people talk about improving their communication skills, they're often really referring to conflict resolution. In other words, they simply want to learn how to win an argument. Improving your everyday communication skills, however, can help you get what you want -- before a disagreement occurs. Clear communication and skillful conflict resolution can strengthen your relationships at work and in your personal life. This article provides easy ways to improve your everyday communication skills, as well as tips to follow when conflict does erupt.

Everyday Communication Skills

Any communication, whether it's resolving a major problem, conducting a meeting or just deciding on plans with friends, is most productive and unlikely to lead to arguments when you're:

Prepared.

Know exactly what you want to address before starting the conversation and have your points well thought out.

Clear about your goal.

Explain at the beginning of the conversation what you hope to accomplish. "It's time to start planning John's surprise party. Let's decide how we're going to divide the responsibilities."

Be a good listener.

Many people are too busy thinking of what they'll say next to really listen. Focus on what you're hearing. It will make your response more meaningful. Demonstrate your understanding of the person's comments by summarizing what they have said. "What I'm hearing is that you feel . . . "

Respectful.

Never discount the other person's input, even if you disagree. Any form of disrespect, even a seemingly innocent chuckle, can be misinterpreted and could impair productive communication.

Silent.

Silence is an effective tool for gathering information. When a person answers your question, simply nod and remain quiet. The person is likely to give more details just to fill the silence. Recap any conversation in which decisions have been made or your questions have been answered. Then ask the participants if they agree with your summary and give them an opportunity to voice any concerns. This helps ensure that everyone understands and agrees with the decisions, reducing the chance for future arguments.

Conflict Resolution

Even with the best communications skills, conflict is sometimes unavoidable. You've heard it all before -- stay calm, remain open-minded and try to see it from the other person's point of view. But you really want to yell and call names. While that may make you feel better in the short term, it will only make the other person unlikely to listen. If you're angry, take a moment to regain your composure. To cool down, you might try taking deep breaths or respectfully stepping away from the conversation for a moment and organizing your thoughts. When you're ready, keep the following advice in mind:

Be specific.

Define the issue in clear, concrete terms that address the "who, what, when, where and why" of the conflict.

Be objective.

Focus on the problem, not the person. "I've noticed that your long lunches are interfering with our deadlines," is more effective than, "You're being irresponsible."

Be a team.

If someone has angered you, it's natural to feel that the problem is his. But since you're the one bothered by it, it is yours as well. Address the conflict as a problem to solve together, not a battle to be won.

Be open to criticism.

Being on the receiving end of criticism is often a tough exercise in restraint. Try to remain open to input and avoid becoming defensive. Instead, ask the person to be specific about exactly what is bothering them and how they'd like it to change. These tips can help you avoid arguments as much as possible, and handle them skillfully when they're inevitable.

Communication Refresher Course

You may have been practicing these tips since you were old enough to say "conflict resolution," but a reminder never hurts. Brush up on these important skills to ensure successful communications in work and personal relationships.

- Respond (with facts and feelings), don't react (with feelings alone).
- Use "I" statements. Instead of, "You never listen to me," say "I feel frustrated when you watch TV while I'm talking to you."
- Ask questions and listen. Many people skip this simple, but important step.
- Remember that opinions alone can settle very few arguments. Use facts.
- Admit when you're wrong.
- Stick with the issue. Don't bring up old arguments or other problems.
- Don't offer advice unless asked.
- Pay attention to your body language. Don't send the wrong message by crossing your arms or turning your body away. Maintain eye contact.
- Wrap up with a vote of confidence, such as, "I'm sure we'll be able to accomplish this together."